

## The Cup of Water

By HONORE WILLISIE  
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Esterly thumped the pillow restlessly with his feverish hands, tossed his legs about until the bedclothes were a hopeless tangle and then lay still. The little room was dead as a tomb with the air that smelled of long sickness and of the cooking of bacon and corn cake in the adjoining kitchen.

Outside, through the tightly closed window, he could see shreds of white clouds speeding across the blue. For days it had been a matter of vital importance to him that the green branches that topped so continuously across the lower wall catch and hold the wisps of white as the upper twigs scratched against the blue, but now, as he gazed in the misery of his fever, not even the seed of the clouds mattered. He wanted water—just a drink, a single half cup, just a drop on his swollen tongue. Again and again he struggled to pull himself from the bed. At each whining shriek of the corded four poster old Mrs. Frazee came to the door, corn-cob pipe in mouth, and tucked him kindly but firmly back.

"You sure can't have no water—not till the fever breaks. It's the only way to break up one of these long runs." Esterly looked up into the kind old face with his fever sick eyes.

"I know you are trying to be good to a stranger, but if only you would send for a doctor! And for heaven's sake, just a little water!"

The old woman looked at Esterly with all the horror in her face that the suggestion of a physician brings to a backwoodsman. "Laws," she said, "it's thirty miles to a doctor, and we'll have you all cured by the time one could get here! You have nothing but a run of fever. Me and my old man are glad to take care of you."

Again she tucked the coverings about him. "My," she said, "ain't you a fine big young fellow?"

Esterly, like a child in his weakness and semidelirium, lay quietly till the old woman left the room. Then again the scudding clouds caught his eye. He wondered weakly how many days it had been since he had come into these Tennessee mountains to hunt. Old Frazee had found him crazy with fever and had brought him to his backwoods cabin, a thousand miles from anywhere, and with the instant hospitality of their kind the old man and his wife were nursing him in their own primitive way. And in all this time no water, nothing but bowlfuls of thortwort tea, black and bitter as quinine, and at mealtime corn cakes with more thortwort tea.

With difficulty he turned and looked out the door into the kitchen. Old Mrs. Frazee was tying on her sunbonnet. After she had fastened and relighted her pipe she came in to Esterly's bedside and looked down at him, leisurely puffing the pipe as she felt his forehead with a hand hard and knotted as a man's. Then, seeing that his eyes seemed clear, she said:

"I've got to go over to Acksonville to meet my girl. She's been to school in Nashville for four years, and I haven't seen her in that time. But now she's home for good. I'll bring some more this week back. Your fever's worse than ever. Remember, now, it's no use for you to try to get the water. Ain't any nearer in the spring. And remember if you do drink any I'll settle you."

Then with a motherly gesture she smoothed the covers about his shoulders and he heard her heavy boots clumping out over the back stoop. Then again he went off into delirium, tossed and turned and called for water. After awhile he was conscious that the sunset was lighting up the tops of the trees and that the clouds were no longer white flecks, but long streamers of purple and gold. He listened intently. No sound came from the kitchen. Mrs. Frazee had not yet returned. With a supreme effort he threw off the bedclothes and staggered toward the kitchen door.

"The spring," he thought, "the spring, the spring." And then a black mist enveloped him and he fell.

After a long time he felt himself lifted and put into bed. Then he heard a woman's voice, a young, soft voice, saying:

"Poor fellow, poor fellow! Heaven's mother, what air! Open the window, father."

Then Mrs. Frazee's voice protested. "No, no, Rose; no drafts. He'll catch cold on top of it all."

Then there was the sound of a window opening, and with the sound he opened his eyes. The candle was on the shelf, just as usual, but instead of burning straight upward, with a long, yellow flame, it spluttered and flickered in a wave of air that Esterly drew into his lungs as though he never could stop. He looked up. Bending over him, soft and dim in the uncertain light, was a woman's face, with the sweetness and quietness of a Madonna.

"Water," he gasped. The girl turned quickly. "Mother," she cried, "you surely have not been trying that worn-out theory."

The old woman drew up her gaunt figure. "It's the way I was brought up. Every one on the mountain was raised the same way."

Here old Frazee's gruff voice broke in: "I always said it was a fool idea. Water never hurt no one."

The girl put her hand on Esterly's forehead. "He must have water," she said.

The old woman shrugged her shoulders. "Oh, if you want to try your

highfalutin notions, go on. I have nothing more to say." And she walked out into the kitchen, Rose and the old man following.

Esterly sank slowly back into his troubled sleep. Then he heard a movement beside the bed. Close to the pillows, on a chair, Rose was putting a wooden bucket, dark and dripping with water. She slipped on her hand under his pillow and raised his head. With the other hand she raised to his lips a great dipper of water.

"Drink," she said. And Esterly drank. Never to his last day was he to forget the taste of that first drink after the long days of parching fever. He drank with sobbing gulps, drank and still drank until the girl put the dipper back into the water.

"Now sleep," she said. And Esterly sank into a long, dreamless slumber that lasted until the window framed the first glimmerings of dawn; then he had another deep drink.

It was afternoon when he woke again, with head clear and body weak and helpless after the run of the fever. Mrs. Frazee bustled in.

"Rose has made you a bed on the stoop, and the old man and I'll carry you out there. The water busted the fever, I guess."

In a few moments Esterly was lying on a cot that snuggled under the vines of the stoop. He lay and watched the splendor of the mountain view which stretched down and down for miles before him. Then he looked up. The girl stood in the doorway with a plate in her hand.

"Rose!" he cried. "Rose, Rose, Rose!" The girl set down the plate and knelt beside him. "Isn't it strange? Isn't it wonderful?" she asked.

"I knew you had come from the mountains," he said. "But—"

"They adopted me, you know. My own father left me a little money, but I liked to live with them, just as they were. You must forgive them their ignorance. The mountains are a hundred years behind, you know, and I love these people."

Esterly lay back. "Then so do I," he said.

"Now you must eat," she said.

He stayed her with feeble hand. "You said you wouldn't marry me because I didn't need you—that I merely wanted you for an ornament to my money. Dear, can't you believe that, rich or poor, I need you?"

The girl looked at him. She had cared for him before, but always there had been something lacking, something that kept her from feeling quite sure, but now that something came. With a gesture that was protecting, maternal, tender, she put her arm across him, her cheek close to his. In silence they looked across the blue haze of the valley, where the swallows circled and dipped, then soared again.

"Yes, you need me," she said.

**Americans Good Old English.**  
Most so-called Americans, and, indeed, Irishmen also, are in reality archaists of the English language which have a habit of surviving where one would least expect to find them. Many persons will tell you that the phrase "to let slide" is an Americanism, but students of English literature will call to mind the following stanza from Chaucer's "Clerkes Tale":

I blame him not that he considered  
In time coming what might him betide,  
But on his lust present was all his thought,  
And for to haue and hunt on every side,  
Well might all other cares let he aside,  
And eke he hold (and that was worst of all)  
Wedden so wil for ought that might befall.

Several other illustrations of so-called Americanisms which occur in Chaucer may be given—as, for example, "I guess," which is frequently to be met with:

With him ther was his sone, a younge  
queler,  
A lover and a lusty bachelor.  
With lokkes crull as they were laide in  
prece.  
Of twenty year of age he was, I gesse.  
—Prologue "Canterbury Tales."

Many quaint words are commonly used in America, as "pitcher" for "jug," "fall" for "autumn." "Homely" is invariably used to express the absence of beauty, as "a homely girl" for "a plain girl." An example of such usage may be found in Shakespeare: Upon a homely object love can wink.  
—Two Gentlemen of Verona, II, 4.  
—London Notes and Queries.

**Charlotte Corday.**

A memorable woman stands upon the scaffold, not in white, but in the red smock of a murderess. It is Charlotte Corday, born d'Armand, and she has killed Marat. If ever murder were justifiable it was this assassination. The sternest moralist cannot refrain from admiring this high souled, dauntless girl, for the murder that she committed is elevated far above an ordinary crime. She was impelled neither by lust of gain nor by jealousy nor by ordinary hate, and she only slew a monster in order to save unhappy France from wholesale slaughter. Shortly before his end Marat had screamed a demand for 2,500 victims at Lyons, for 3,000 at Marseilles, for 28,000 at Paris and for even 300,000 in Brittany and in Calvados.

No wonder that Danton, Camille Desmoulins and Robespierre went to see this extraordinary and most resolute young woman, whose motive had dragged her conscience and who neither denied her act nor sought to escape its consequences. She was beheld at 7:30 in the July summer evening. Calm eyed and composed, she went to death, but she turned pale for a moment when first she caught sight of the guillotine. "I killed one man to save 100,000, a villain to save innocents, a savage, wild beast to give repose to my country." Never has murder found so noble an excuse, and she was only twenty-five. —London Spectator.

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**Where Man's Influence Is Fatal.**  
Man is the only animal which is always accompanied by disease except those creatures that are his companions and share his patronage. There is reason to believe that the denizens of the forests, the veld, the rivers and the ocean, so far as they escape man's influence, live, with hardly an exception, healthy lives. Chronic ailments begin with man's protection in the dairy, stable and kennel. Man has created artificial conditions with which the "thousand ills that flesh is heir to" are associated. It is now his supreme task to bring these conditions into harmony with the laws of his being. Sickness and debility are not to be regarded as natural and inevitable parts of our heritage, but as the fruits of rebellion against nature's laws, and therefore to be got rid of. If the human family dwelt in ventilated houses, breathed pure air, lived temperately, with little or no alcohol, and took daily exercise in the open, it would perhaps know little more of gout, rheumatism, cancer, fever, lung-bag, dyspepsia, asthma, and the host of infectious troubles than do the lower animals.—London Telegraph.

**An Old News Rag.**  
A curious relic of the old days of the paper duties, which so much hampered journalistic enterprise in the first half of the nineteenth century is the first number of Berthold's Political Handkerchief, being a news sheet printed on cotton fabric instead of paper. It is dated London, Saturday, Sept. 3, 1831; price, fourpence. And the letterpress, which is fairly legible, is as remarkable as the material on which it is printed. The tone of this news rag is intensely radical, but it reproduces the order of ceremonial to be observed at the coronation of King William IV. and Queen Adelaide on the following Thursday, and it is announced that a proclamation to the people of Europe will appear in our "next cotton." It is embellished with a medallion woodcut of Napoleon crossing the Alps, but the ink in this pictorial effort was too much for the cotton, and the Alps are in a fog and the emperor, on horseback, very indistinct.—London Mail.

**Flance and Sweetheart.**  
For centuries we have tried to get the word that expresses the relation of the man to the maid he intends to marry. "Intended" has been tried and found wanting. "My bloke," "my young man"—these combinations are not heard in the best circles. "My betrothed," a phrase used in Germany, has not taken root in England. "My sweetheart" is pretty enough, but it lacks the official sound. Young men and maidens become engaged and marry, but they have to cross the channel for the word that leads them to the altar. One might suggest to the blushing girl who has to allude to the man of her acceptance "my future." French maidens speak of "mon futur," and it sounds comprehensive.—London Chronicle.

**Advertising.**  
Until business is successful without a proper store, proper employees and the right amount of capital, it must be assumed that these three conditions are essential to the conduct of profitable trade, and it is as obvious that so long as advertising accompanies the business of profit advertising is necessary for the upbuilding of business. The mere appearance of advertising indicates that business is being done or will be done, and so long as everybody prefers to buy of men of success rather than of men of failure just so long will the man who advertises be likely to do the largest business.

**The Moat.**  
Before the days of artillery the moat was an effective means of defense, particularly when filled with water. In very large forts or castles it sometimes assumed the dimensions of a lake, being often 100 yards wide and ten to twenty feet deep. The moat was crossed by a drawbridge, which could be raised at an instant's notice. When the moat was too wide to permit of this bridge covering the entire distance a slight wooden bridge was employed.

**Its Curious Origin.**  
The word "eavesdropper" has a curious origin. In the early part of last century the penalty of listening to or overlooking secret assemblies, especially Masonic ones, was suspension under the eaves of a house on a rainy day till the water ran through the clothing and down to the shoes of the offender.—London Express.

**Court Terms.**  
A court of law is a reminiscence of the time when justice sat in the open courtyard, and the "dock" is from a German word meaning a receptacle, while the "bar" is a Welsh word meaning a branch of a tree used to separate the lords of justice from their vassals.

**His Revolution.**  
"Speaking of revolutions," began the loquacious man, "I was the central figure in one myself once."  
"Somewhere in South America?"  
"No, in Massachusetts. I got caught in the shafting of a woolen mill." —Philadelphia Ledger.

**He Marked.**  
"This," said the enthusiastic young reporter, "is going to be one of the best stories the paper has had for a month. Now, mark my words."  
Whereupon the editor seized his large club shaped blue pencil and so did.

**Grit.**  
Grit is the grain of character. It may be described as heronism materialized—spirit and will thrust into heart, brain and backbone, so as to form part of the physical substance of the man.

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